

RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT

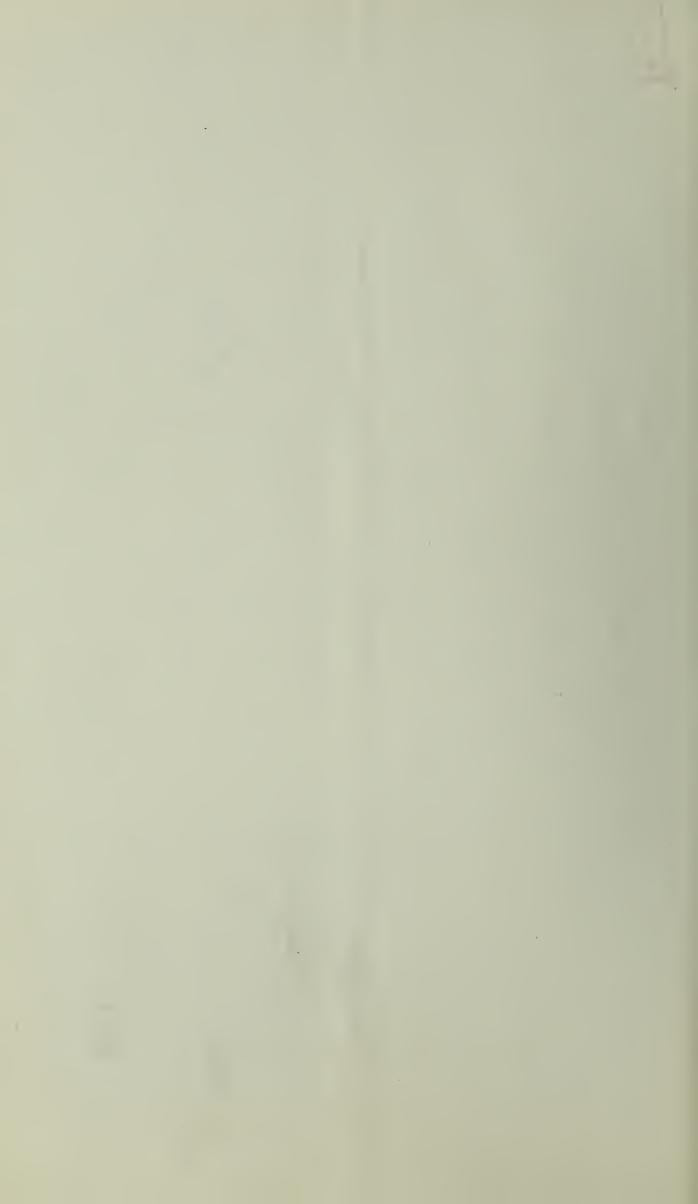
of tho

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1951.

R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH



RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1951

Health Department,
Albert Street,
BRIDGWATER.

August, 1952.

To:-

The Chairman and Members of the Bridgwater Rural District Council

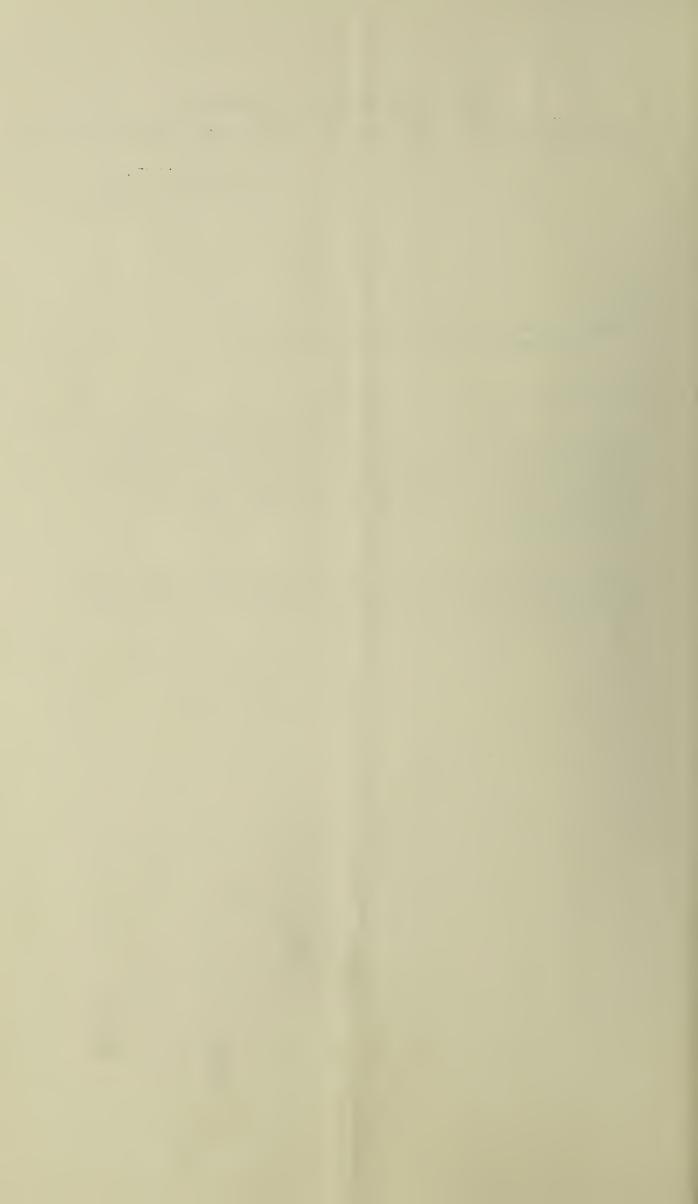
Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1951. Apart from measles, there were no major outbreaks of infectious diseases in the District during the year. There was an outbreak of a mild type of influenza, but although the morbidity rate was high, there was at no time any serious dislocation of services. The vital statistics show no significant change from those of the previous year.

I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their support, Mr. Maile and his assistants for their excellent co-operation, and the Heads of other Departments for their assistance during the year.

I am, Your obedient servant,

R.H. WATSON.

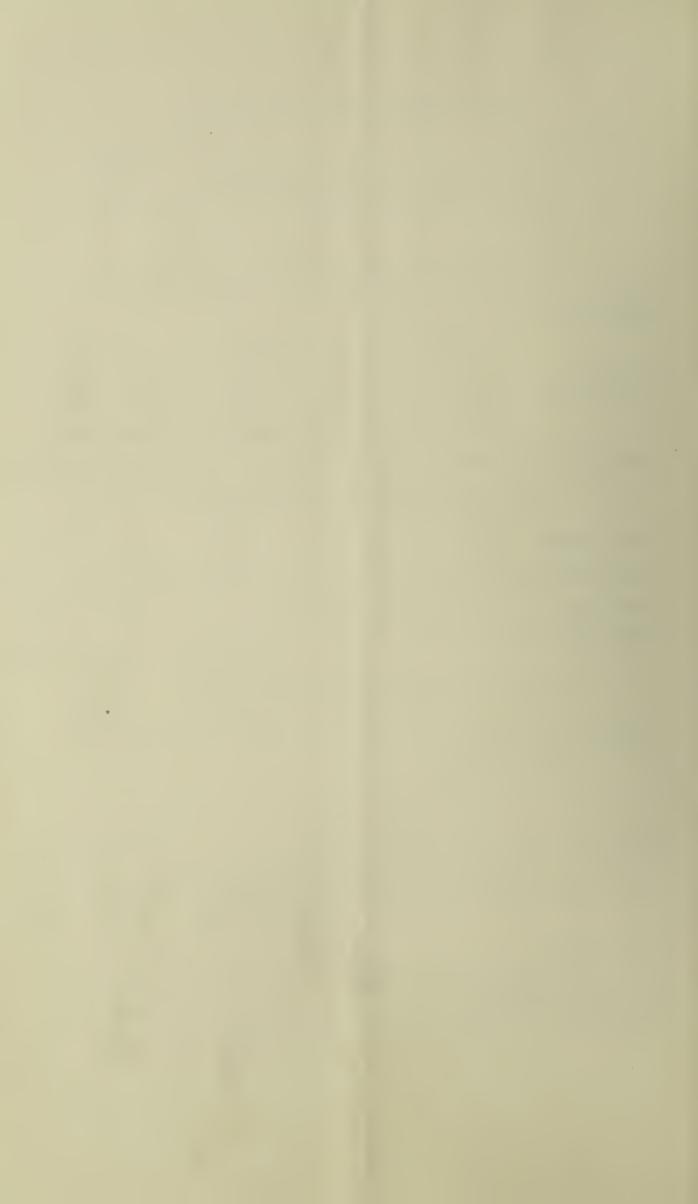


STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1951

Area (Acres)
Population (Registrar General's estimate) 1951 86,613 20,080 No. of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1951 Rateable value on 31st December, 1951 £84 Sum represented by 1d. rate on 31st December, 1951 £ £84,356 £ 31,4.18.4d. In the following tables the figures in brackets represent the corresponding figures for the previous year. Live Births Female Total Male 147 Legitimate Illegitimate 10 (160)155 157 Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population 15.54 (15.98) 15.5 Comparative figure for England and Wales Comparability factor for the District (6)Still Births 4 . . . Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live & still births) 12.82 (19.17) Total number of deaths 254 (231)Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident 12.65 (11.78) population Comparative figure for England and Wales 12.5 Comparability factor for the District Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age) Legitimate Illegitimate 8 Rate of all infants per 1,000 births 25.64 (25.56) 1,000 legitimate Rate for all legitimate infants per live births 27.68 (23.33) Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births Nil (76.92)Other Deaths Deaths from Malignant Neoplasms Deaths from Measles

Deaths from Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea

Deaths from Whooping Cough



CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1951

The state of the s	- Martin Color Col	7-	
CAUSE OF DEATH	M	F	TOTAL
ALL CAUSES	126	128	254
1. Tuberculosis of respiratory system 2. Other forms of tuberculosis 3. Syphilitic disease 4. Diphtheria 5. Whooping Cough 6. Meningococcal infections 7. Acute Poliomyelitis 8. Measles 9. Other infective and parasitic diseases 10. Malignant neoplasm of stomach 11. Malignant neoplasm of lung, bronchus 12. Malignant neoplasm of breast 13. Malignant neoplasm of uterus 14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms 15. Leukaemia aleukaemia 16. Diabetes 17. Vascular lesions of nervous system 18. Coronary disease, angina 19. Hypertension with heart disease 20. Other heart diseases 21. Other circulatory diseases 22. Influenza 23. Pneumonia 24. Bronchitis 25. Other diseases of the respiratory system 26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum 27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea 28. Nephritis and nephrosis 29. Hyperplasis of prostate 30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion 31. Congenital malformations 32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases 33. Motor vehicle accidents 34. All other accidents 35. Suicide 36. Homicide and operations of war	5	1	6 1 - 53357124573751044142 - 2633



PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable infectious diseases that occurred in the Rural District during 1951. The table is drawn up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications owing to corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioner or the Medical Officer at the Isolation Hospital.

Disease		Cases r	notified 1950
Acute Poliomyelitis Meningococcal Infect Erysipelas Measles Opthalmia Neonatorum Pneumonia Scarlet Fever Whooping Cough Food Poisoning Puerperal Pyrexia Dysentery	ions	1 371 13 26 63 4 2	5139153512 -
	TOTAL	482	155

It will be noted that the high incidence of infectious diseases is due almost entirely to the usual biennial outbreak of Measles. Arrangements have been made by the Public Health Laboratory Service to supply doctors with serum which may be used to give a passive immunity to young and debilitated children who are closely exposed to infection with measles, and who would be exposed to undue risk by contracting the disease. The immunity thus produced is of a temporary nature and is used simply to tide doctors.

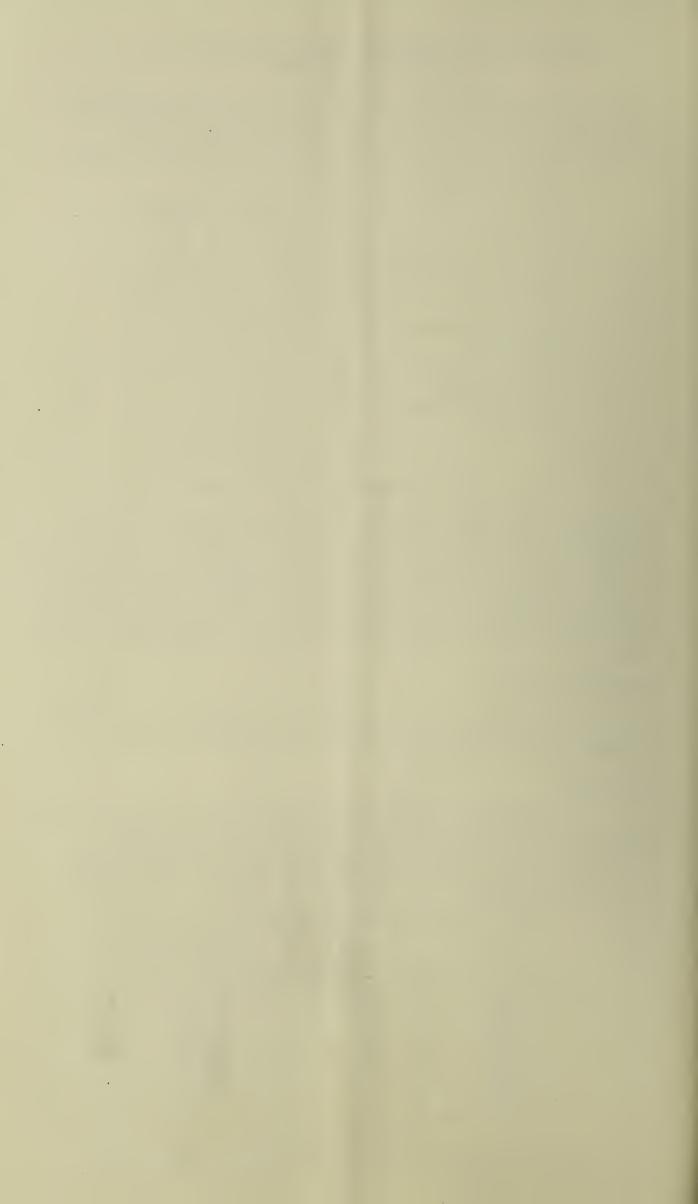
Infantile Paralysis

Although there was a moderate incidence of infantile paralysis in Somerset, only one case was notified in the Bridgwater Rural District.

Diphtheria

No cases of diphtheria were notified. This satisfactory state of affairs is almost entirely due to the nation wide immunisation campaign which was begun in 1942. The following table shows the incidence and number of deaths from diphtheria in England and Wales since 1944 and clearly shows the progress which has been made.

Year	Deaths	Corrected Notifications
1944; 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950	934 722 472 244 156 84 49 34 +	23,199 18,596 11,986 5,609 3,575 1,890 962 699 +



The reason that this campaign was so successful was that, with the horrors of diphtheria fresh in their minds, parents were anxious to have their children immunised, with the result that a large percentage of the susceptible population were protected. However, the very success of the campaign is tending to produce an atmosphere of false security, and while parents are still willing to have their children immunised, many are not prepared to exert themselves to have it done. This is proved by the number of children who are unprotected on entering school, but who are then immunised simply because the doctor calls at the school and this relieves parents of all effort, other than signing a consent form.

By far the most effective means of persuading people to have their children immunised, is the direct and personal approach of the doctor, district nurse and voluntary welfare workers but, nevertheless, it is felt that the annual publicity campaign which is undertaken by the Council in conjunction with the Borough Council, plays a useful part.

Children may be immunised by their family doctor, by the school doctors, or at the infant welfare clinics which are now held regularly in most parts of the District.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year,

Aged under 5 years	Aged 5 - 15 years	Total
273	32	305

The method of protection commonly in use is to give each child two immunising injections at the age of one year, and a third reinforcing injection early in school life. The reinforcing injection is most important to ensure protection during the early school years, and 226 such injections were given during the year.

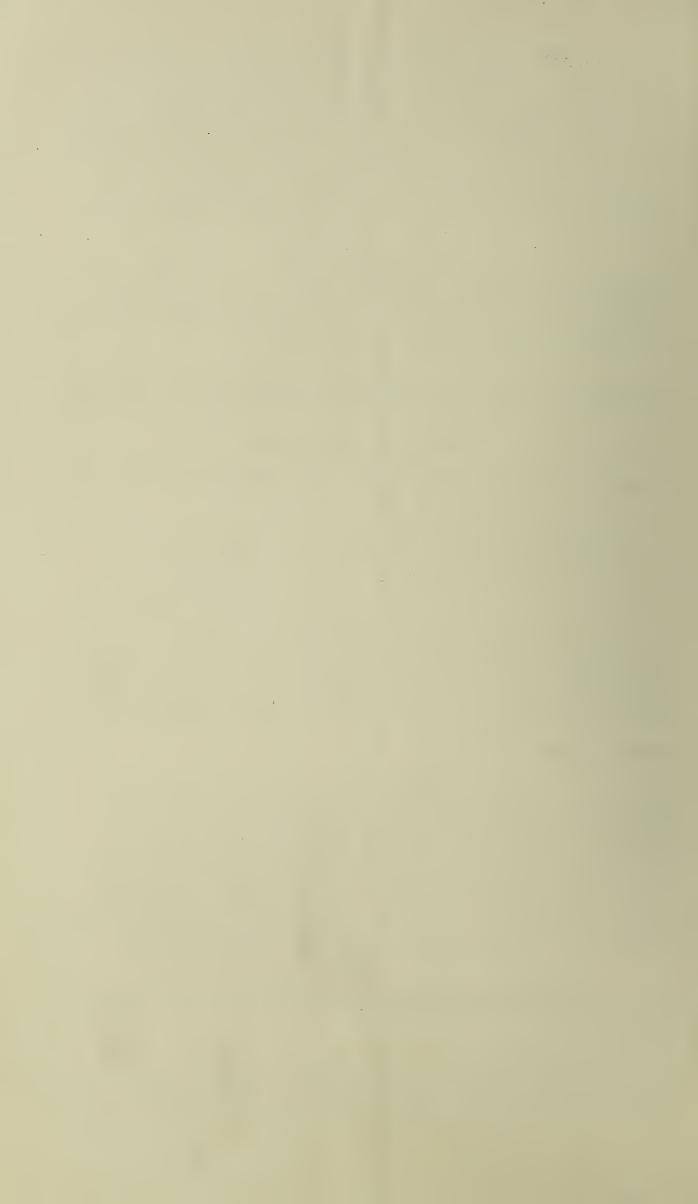
Scarlet Fever

An outbreak of Scarlet Fever occurred at a mixed residential and day school for girls. At first four cases occurred and it was found that a member of the staff with a chronic sinus infection was a carrier of the offending organisms. She was removed from contact with the pupils and no further cases arose. However, a month later further cases of Scarlet Fever began to occur and in all, a further nine cases were admitted to hospital. It is considered that this second outbreak was caused by a "return case," i.e. one of the first batch becoming reinfectious after the cessation of treatment. All the secondary cases were confined to one dormitory

This outbreak caused a considerable amount of work to the Public Health Department.

Tuberculosis

There were 23 cases of respiratory and 5 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. The figure for respiratory cases is 3 more than the previous year.



National Assistance Act, 1948, Section 47.

This Section of the Act enables Local Authorities to apply to Court for an order to secure the care of persons who, by reason of infirmity, old age or other conditions, are unable to care for themselves and are not receiving from other people proper care and attention, and who are living in insanitary conditions. Several cases were dealt with, but in no case was it found necessary to proceed for a Court Order. In all cases alternative means were found to alleviate unsatisfactory conditions.

Food Poisoning

An outbreak of food poisoning was investigated. Early in the outbreak pressed tongue manufactured by a local butcher cameunder suspicion, and further sales were stopped, pending investigation. It was not possible to obtain specimens from patients, but samples of pressed tongue taken from different infected homes and from the butcher's shop all showed heavy growth of a germ Staphylococcus Aureus, which, clinically, was the organism responsible for the outbreak. An identical germ was also obtained from a nasal swab taken from the butcher who had had a cold when the pressed meat was manufactured. The remainder of the meat was destroyed and no further cases of food poisoning occurred. In all, eight cases were notified to the Health Department.

Housing

The following table shows the progress made during the year:-

	Houses erected during year		Houses of	in course erection	to fla	ats or	Temporary such as Army Huts etc.
	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	
Local Authority	60		28				23
Private Enterprise	1/4		3	!	10		
TOTAL	74		31		10		23

Total number of Post War Houses completed by:- (a) Local Authority (b) Private Enterprise Houses required:-	325 92
(a) to replace those unfit	732 8 not o) known
Total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year	
Houses occupied that have been condemned as totally unf	Cit 2
Number of houses found overcrowded	11



SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Water Supply

Samples of water have been regularly taken from the various sources of supply during the year, and generally speaking these have been satisfactory. Except in special and isolated circumstances the quantity of water proved sufficient for the needs of the District.

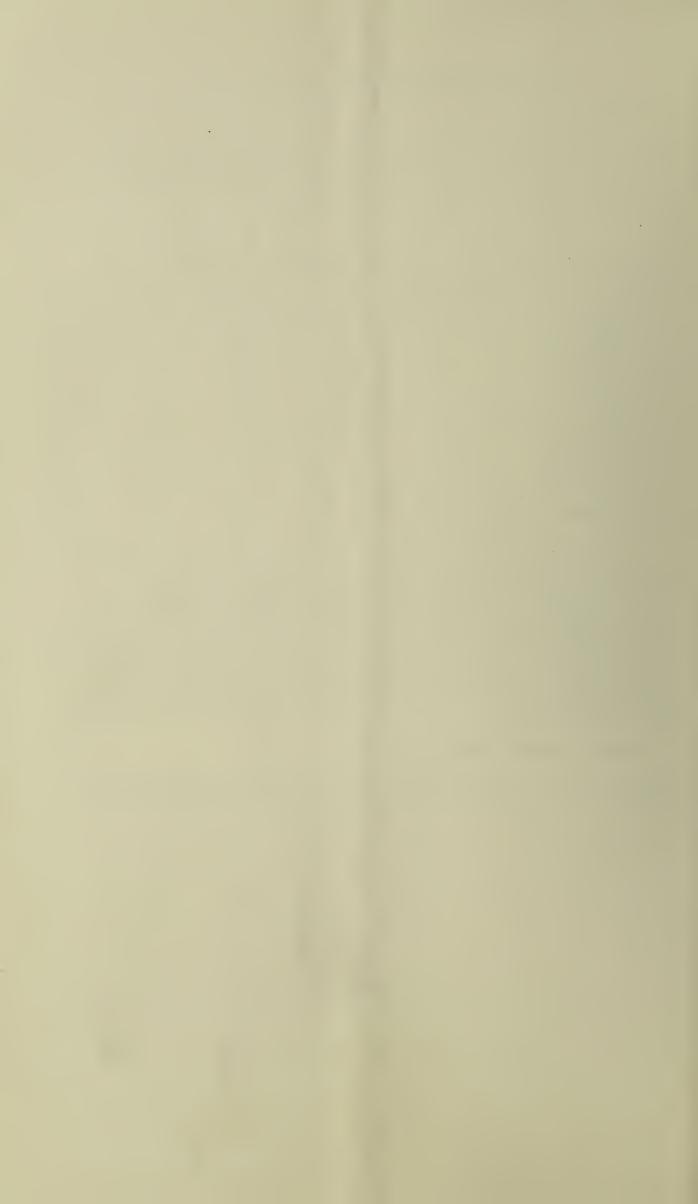
Progress was made with the Over Stowey scheme, and at the end of the year work was nearing completion.

Supply	Number of examinations	Rep Satisfactory	Not satisfactory
1. Fiddington	14	9	5
2. Goathurst	12	12	nua .
3. Nether Stowey	14	12	2
4. Thurloxton	12	12	~
5. Willoughby	22	21	1
6. Greinton	5	1	4

There is always a danger in using these small untreated, or partially treated water supplies. Owing to the remoteness of the source of supply, human contamination is not likely, but should it occur an outbreak of enteric fever might result. The water supply at Greinton was a private one and because of the unsatisfactory results obtained from bacteriological examination, representation was made to the owners. Eventually the supply of water to that area was taken over by the Council and the offending springs were eliminated from the system.

2. Sanitary Inspection of the Area

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1951.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my twelfth Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1951.

Staff

The following alterations affecting the staff of the Department took place during the year.

In February the Council decided that the Additional Sanitary Inspector should assist the Engineer's staff as required in the inspection of property under the Building Byelaws.

In June, by resolution of the Council, Mr. R.J. Organ, General Assistant, was transferred to the Treasurer's Department, his position in the Public Health Department, in the opinion of the Council, having become redundant.

Complaints and Nuisances.

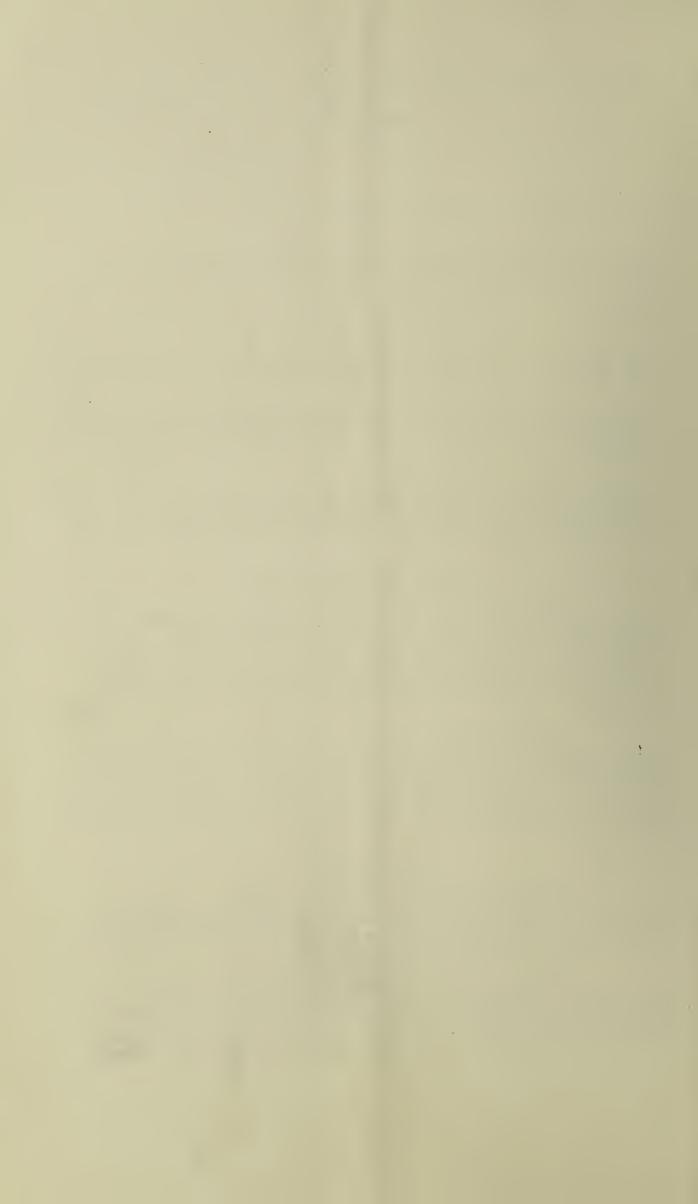
The number of complaints investigated during the year was 166 an increase of 18 on the previous year. In most cases nuisances were abated as a result of informal action and it was only found necessary to serve 4 Abatement Notices. On inspection a number of complaints were found to be not justified and no further action was taken in regard to them.

Of the nuisances found, 137 were abated during the year. Difficulty was again experienced in securing compliance with informal and statutory notices to abate nuisances, reasons given being the high cost of work and the shortage of labour and materials. The number of visits made in connection with nuisances was 527.

Water Supply.

Samples of water for bacteriological examination were taken from the five sources of supply controlled by the Council at monthly intervals during the year, and additional samples were obtained as found necessary.

Special investigations were made in regard to the quantity and quality of existing water supplies in the Plainsfield, Aisholt and Merridge areas in the parish of Spaxton and at Nythe in the parish of Ashcott, in connection with proposed extension of water mains to serve those areas.



A number of inspections were also made and samples of water taken in regard to pollution of the supply to the village of Greinton.

A total of 112 visits were made in connection with water supply during the year.

Housing.

The number of inspections carried out under the Housing Acts was 292; 6 houses were represented as unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost and two Demolition Orders were made by the Council. In 3 cases the Council agreed to accept undertakings from owners to carry out approved works within a stipulated time, and in 7 cases undertakings which had been previously accepted were fulfilled. 4 houses, the subject of Demolition Orders, were demolished during the year.

Building materials continued in short supply during the year, and the labour shortage in the building industry is still acute. The rising cost of building work also contributed to the difficulties encountered in getting repairs and improvements to property carried out.

374 visits were made during the year in regard to the reconditioning and alteration of existing houses and the installation of new sanitary fittings.

84 visits were made to houses in respect to which grants were made under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts and The Housing (Financial Provisions) Acts.

The Rural Housing Survey was continued in the early part of the year, but on the instructions of the Council all work on the Survey terminated on 30th April, 1951. At that date only 76 houses (excluding Council houses, reconditioned property, houses on Woolavington Estate and recently built houses) remained to be inspected. The decision to terminate the Survey, particularly in view of the fact that it was almost completed, was very unfortunate as apart from the original purpose of the Survey the possession in the Office of a complete record of each house would have been invaluable.

From 1st January to 30th April, 194 houses were inspected and classified as follows:-

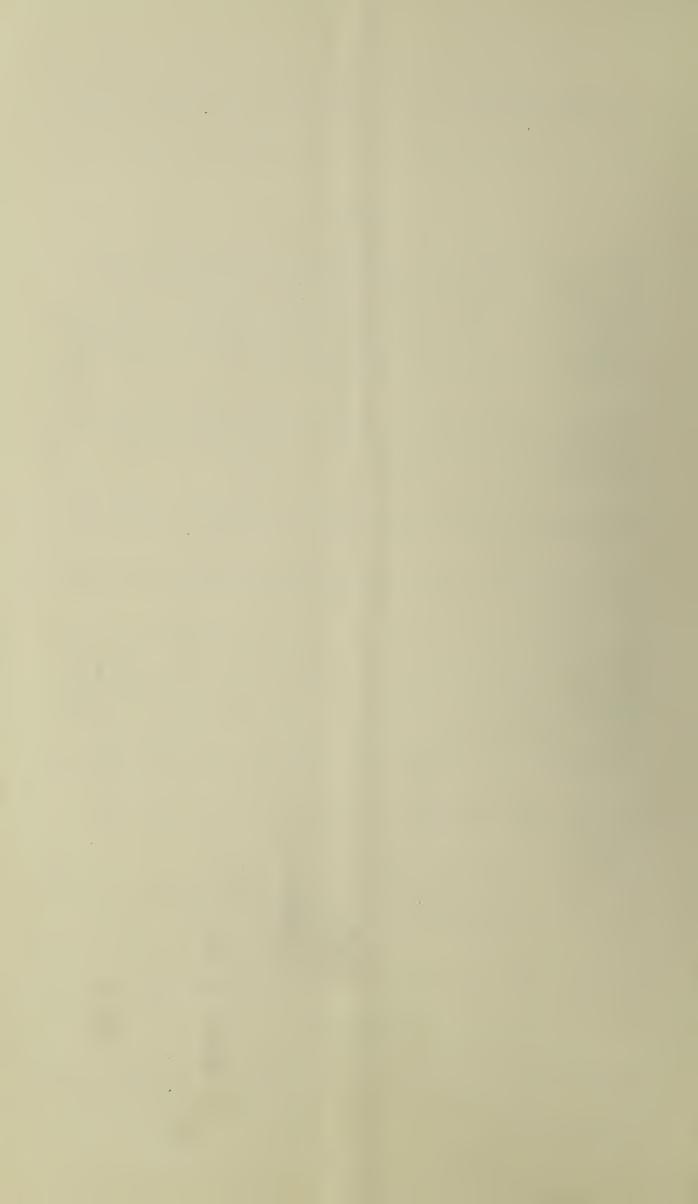
Categories:-	1. Satisfactory in all respects	6
	2. Minor defects	45
	3. Repairs and structural alterations	122
	4. Suitable for Housing (R.W.) Acts	-
	4a. Suitable for acquisition	•••
	5. Unfit and cannot be repaired at	
	a reasonable expense	21

Re-inspections were made in thirteen cases.

Overcrowding.

Seven new cases of overcrowding were discovered during the year, and six cases were abated by informal action.

Thirty three visits were made in connection with overcrowding.



Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

The following particulars indicate the action taken under Part I of the Factories Act, 1937:-

		Number		Number of		
	Premises	on Register	Insps.	Written	Occupiers prosecuted	
(i)	Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority	89	27	3		
(ii)	Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	-	-	-	-	
(iii)	Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers premises)	-	-		one.	
	TOTAL	89	27	3	Brid.	

	No. of	No. of cases in which			
	Found	Remedied		erred By H.M. Insp.	prose- cutions were instituted
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	2	2	The Carlotte Control of the Ca	***************************************	
Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Insffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary conveniences (S.7)					
(a) insufficient	1	1		1	
(b) unsuitable or defective	2	2		2	
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)					
TOTAL	5	5		3	

As a result of informal action, new sanitary conveniences were provided at one factory.

Bakehouses.

Eleven visits were made to bakehouses, and informal notices were duly complied with.

One new bakehouse of good modern design was constructed and brought into use during the year.

Shops.

Twenty inspections of shops were carried out.

General Sanitation.

The following improvements were carried out, generally as a result of informal action:-

W.Cs	79
Baths	41
Sinks	43
Chemical closets	6
Drainage systems	49
Lavatory basins	46
Connections to water main	3
Connections to sewer	6
Larders	8

A number of other minor improvements were also carried out.

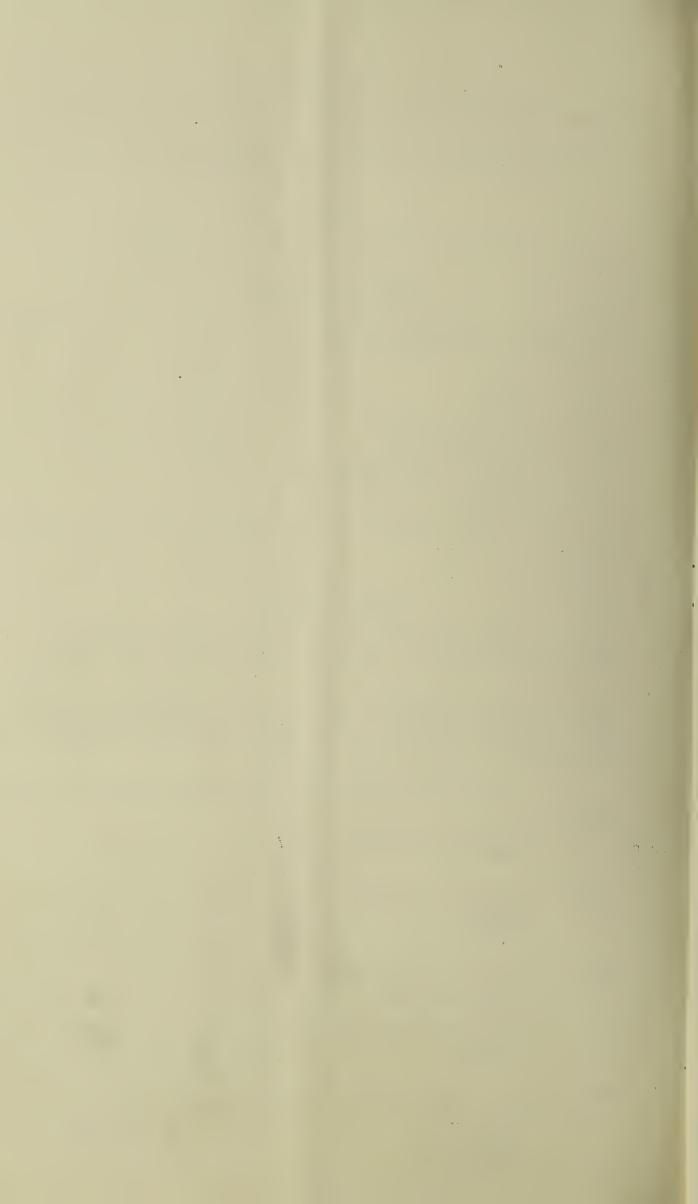
Meat and Foods.

Every effort was made during the year to maintain the regular inspection of meat and other food at retail shops and slaughterhouses and 176 visits were made for this purpose.

It is also the practice to inspect the meat of animals killed for home consumption under licences issued by the Food Control Committee, and in view of the percentage of animals found to be diseased, this practice has been found to be justified, 273 visits were made for this purpose.

I give below details of food condemned during the year:-

Beasts.	Carcase and organs Lungs	1 1
Sheep.	Carcase and organs Plucks Mutton	7 2 50 lbs.
Pigs.	Carcase and organs Head and tongue Lungs Mesenteries and intestines Plucks Kidneys	2 13 1 10 4 3
Other foo	ds. Tins, jars and pkts. of various foods Ham Bacon Chicken	283 32 lbs. 150 lbs.



Byelaws made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for securing the observance of sanitary and cleanly conditions and practices in connection with the handling, wrapping and delivery of food, and the sale of food in the open air came into force in the district on 29th January, 1951. Copies of the byelaws were distributed to all known wholesalers and retailers of food, and to the proprietors of catering establishments.

Knackers Yard.

The knackers yard at Dunball is being maintained in very good condition and was visited on 15 occasions during the year.

Milk and Dairies.

The number of retail purveyors of milk on the register is 19, and 15 visits were made for the inspection of dairies during the year.

Ice cream

The number of premises registered for the storage and sale of ice cream at the end of the year was 44, and 5 premises were also registered for the manufacture of ice cream. Each of these manufacturers produced ice cream by the "cold mix" method, followed by boiling of the product. Ninety three samples were taken during the year the results being as follows:-

- 77 samples were placed in provisional Grade 1.
- 9 samples were placed in provisional Grade 2. 4 samples were placed in provisional Grade 3.
- 3 samples were placed in provisional Grade 4.

These results are considered to be very satisfactory.

A total of 124 visits were made in connection with the manufacture, storage and sale of ice cream.

Moveable Dwellings.

101 visits were made during the year in connection with moveable dwellings.

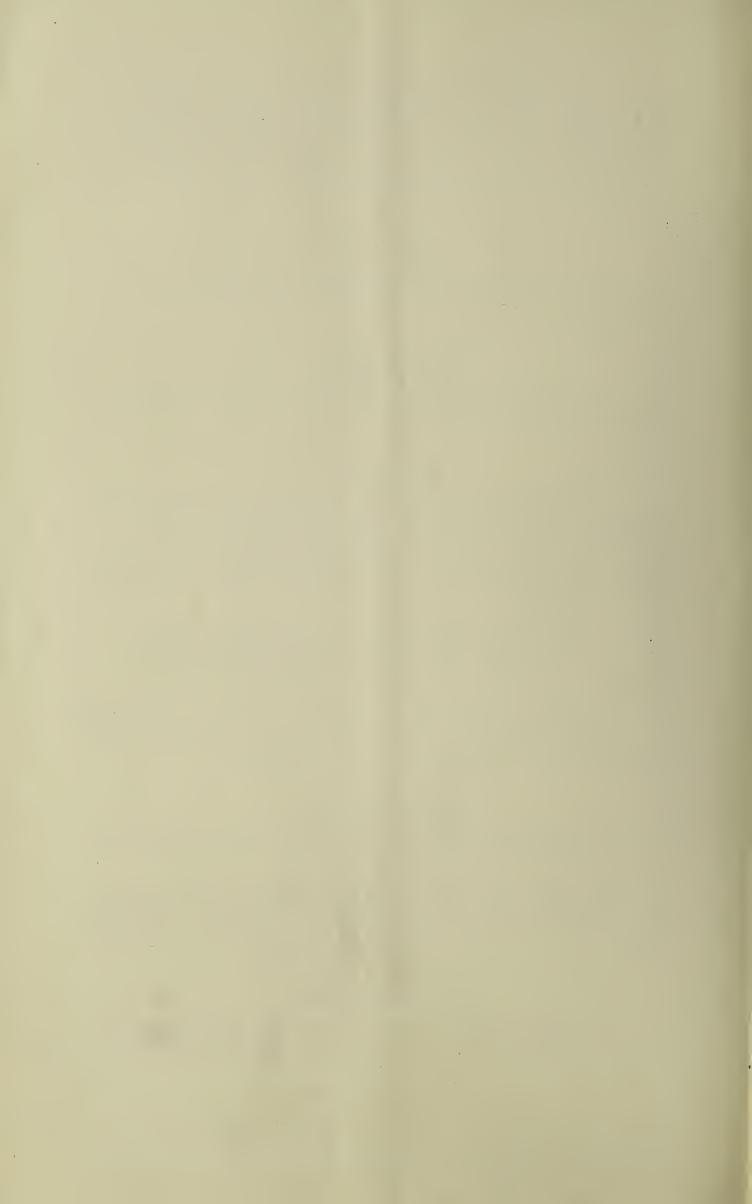
There are now six licensed camping sites in the district, all of which are small. Licences have been issued to station and use eighteen caravans on individual sites, and there is an increasing tendency to use caravans as permanent homes.

Infectious Diseases.

38 disinfections were carried out during the year, 78 visits being made in connection with infectious diseases

Verminous Premises.

42 visits were made to verminous premises and treatment for the destruction of vermin was carried out at 18 premises. 51 visits were made in connection with rodent infestation in addition to those made by the Rodent Operative.



Atmospheric Pollution.

24 observations were made after the receipt of complaints of excessive emission of smoke from the boiler chimney of a hostel. After informal action a considerable inprovement was noted.

Summary of Visits.

Water Supply Drainage Knackers Yard Moveable Dwellings Factories Bakehouses Shops Rodent Infestation Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits Nuisances New Work Housing Inspections Overcrowding Miscellaneous Housing Visits Infectious Diseases Verminous Premises Butchers' Shops and Slaughterhouses Animals killed for Home Consumption Dairies Ice cream Premises Miscellaneous Food Visits Housing (R.W.) Acts, etc. Food preparing premises Atmospheric Pollution	112 347 15 101 27 11 20 51 121 527 374 292 176 273 15 124 36 814 124
	3.002

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Your obedient servant,

F.A. MAILE,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

